

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the subject application and request reconsideration of the subject application based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-4, 6 and 16-19 are pending in the subject application.

Claims 5 and 7-15 were previously canceled.

Claims 1-4, 6 and 16-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The Examiner did indicate that claims 1 and 18, and thus the claims dependent therefrom would be allowable if re-written or amended so as to overcome the 35 U.S.C. §112 rejections. Claims 1, 3 and 18 were objected to because of identified informalities.

Claims 1, 3 and 18 were amended as suggested by the Examiner to overcome the identified informalities. In the interests of advancing prosecution, claims 1 and 18 also were amended to include language directed to step S6 in Fig. 2 of the subject application.

The amendments to the claims are supported by the originally filed disclosure.

35 U.S.C. §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH REJECTIONS

Claims 1-4, 6 and 16-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 on the grounds that the claims are incomplete for omitting essential steps. The Office Action provides specific comments concerning claims 1 and 18 and further provides that the claims not specifically addressed stand rejected by virtue of their dependency. The following addresses the rejections provided by the Examiner.

As to the missing step concern this is directed to step S6 of Fig. 2, Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertion that an essential step is omitted from the claims. It is clear from the discussion in the subject application that the encryption process associated with the second character string includes converting encrypted index values (*i.e.*, the transformed or replaced index values) to characters. Thus, Step S6 is embodied in the claims. Notwithstanding this, in the interests of advancing prosecution claims 1 and 18 were amended to include language

regarding the encryption of the converted index values. Thus, claims 1 and 18 expressly embody language directed to step S6 of the subject application.

As to the missing step concern that is directed to step S1 as shown in Fig. 2 of the subject application, Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertion that an essential step is omitted from claims 1 and 18.

Claim 1 includes the step of “associating an index value with each character in the first character string” and claim 18, includes the step of “associating an index value with each character in the first character string.” It is respectfully submitted that these clauses of claims 1 and 18 clearly reflect the discussion embodied in the specification regarding step S1. Thus, Applicants submit that step S1 is embodied in claims 1 and 18.

If the Examiner is objecting to the word “associating” appearing in the language of the claims and would prefer the word --providing-- instead, then Applicants authorize the Examiner to enter an Examiner’s amendment to make this change.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-4, 6 and 16-19 satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112 and, as such, are in a condition for allowance.

CLAIMS 1 & 18

The above-referenced Office Action provides that claims 1 and 18 would be allowable if they were amended or re-written to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In as much as claims 2-4, 6, 16-17 and 19 depend from one of claims 1 and 18, Applicants thus understand that claims 2-4, 6, 16-17 and 19 also would be allowable after the §112 rejection of claims 1 and 18 was overcome.

As provided above, claims 1 and 18 were amended to resolve the §112 concern that is directed to Step S6, as detailed in the grounds for rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. As to the concern that is directed to Step S1, as detailed in the grounds for rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, Applicants believe that the allegedly missing step is embodied in claims 1 and 18.

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It is respectfully submitted that in view of the foregoing comments and amendments to claims 1 and 18, each of claims 1 and 18 are considered to be in allowable form.

It is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in a condition for allowance.
Early and favorable action is requested.

Applicants believe that additional fees are not required for consideration of the within Response. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, the Commissioner is hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. **04-1105**.

Respectfully submitted,
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